

Provider Recruitment and Retention

The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health (OPCRH) works to help medically underserved and rural communities recruit and retain health professionals. OPCRH administers the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), the Conrad 30 (J-1 Visa) program, and the Rural, Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet) for Hawaii.

NHSC focuses on the recruitment of primary care providers in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA's) and is operated through the Bureau of Health Care and Delivery Assistance of the Health Resources and Services Administration. NHSC providers consist of 4 types:

- Obligated Scholars - medical school or mid-level practitioner graduates who have been provided tuition in support of return for obligated service in HPSAs;
- Loan Repayment Program Participants - NHSC provides the state with matching grants to repay educational loans in exchange for service in HPSAs;
- Commissioned Officers - NHSC allocates dentists and physicians who are assigned by the corps to work in an underserved area; and
- Volunteers - Health professionals who are interested in serving in an underserved area.

See <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/> for more information.

J-1 physicians, also known as Foreign Medical Graduates or International Medical Graduates, are physicians from other countries who have sought and received a J-1 exchange visitor visa. The visa allows holders to remain in the U.S. until their studies are completed. At the completion of their studies, they may stay in the country to practice in a federally designated health professional shortage area or medically underserved area, if sponsored by a U.S. government agency. State government agencies also may sponsor J-1 physician waiver requests, which are called Conrad State 30 programs.

3RNet provides rural communities and facilities in Hawaii with a free resource for posting their opportunities to a group of candidates with an interest in working in rural and underserved areas.